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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 6 July 1994, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. BUTLER (Australia)

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/34, Parts I-III, E/1994/35, E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/84, E/1994/93)

Ms. MESA (World Food Programme), speaking on behalf of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) regarding the suggestion made at the preceding meeting that JCGP should be asked to provide analytical reports and suggest topics for discussion by the Economic and Social Council, said that JCGP saw its role as one of providing input to the Council on issues of common relevance to the various funds and programmes. Some issues identified by the individual Executive Boards might not fall within the Group's purview, and issues of system-wide relevance to the funds, programmes and agencies could be identified by other inter-agency mechanisms.

JCGP would consider the suggestion at its next general meeting, in light of the decisions of the Council at its current session. The Group's decisions would then be brought to the attention of the Council.

After a discussion in which Mr. SORENSON (International Labour Organization), the PRESIDENT, Mrs. VASISHT (India), Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) and Mr. HEIN (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) took part, Mr. SORENSON (International Labour Organization) said that it would be appropriate for both JCGP and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) to provide policy guidance to the Economic and Social Council on matters within their spheres of competence.

Mrs. VOLKOFF (Canada) welcomed the statement made on behalf of the JCGP. She also wondered whether any of the funds and programmes wished to offer their individual views on the subject.

Mr. GRAISSE (United Nations Development Programme) said that the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund considered that its work was proceeding well. In consultations prior to the next organizational session of the Council, the Board might discuss what issues it should ask the Council to consider in the first instance, rather than take them up itself. The governing bodies of the United Nations development funds and programmes might consider that idea in informal discussions and inform the President of the Council of the outcome.

Mrs. AMERASEKARE (Sri Lanka) said that broad policy-making must be the task of the General Assembly, while policy decisions on the implementation of operational activities within the framework of the General Assembly resolutions were the purview of the Council. The Council also could make recommendations to the General Assembly on various issues. For example, it could consider whether the adoption of country strategy notes should be staggered to take into account the need to harmonize the notes with national development plans.

She was uncertain where the dividing line was between the operational activity segment and the coordination segment of the Council's deliberations. She also believed that the reports of the funding agencies to the Council should include a section on matters referred by their Executive Boards to the Council for consideration.

At the conclusion of the session, it would be useful for the President to provide the funding agencies with a summary reflecting the issues and concerns raised during the session, thereby enabling them to prepare analyses for the Council's use at its next session.

The PRESIDENT said that the distinction between the operational and coordination segments would become clearer as the debate in the current session progressed, particularly in the course of the informal consultations that were about to begin on the role of the Council in coordinating policy and strategies for operational activities pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/162. At the current session, the coordination

segment would deal with the specific themes indicated in the documents relating to the agenda. The consultations also would address the form which decisions emerging from discussions during the operational segment should take.

Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) praised the ongoing reform of the leading development bodies, which had thus far been quite successful. He shared the feeling of some delegations that the recent session of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Executive Board had not given sufficient consideration to implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 and the decisions adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. On the whole, his delegation was satisfied with the discussions at the present session of the Council regarding a future programme of development for the United Nations. He wished to stress the provision in Executive Board resolution 94/14, which stated that national development priorities should play a key role in the composition of the country strategy notes and similar documents.

His delegation regretted the reduction in special programme resources for the fifth programming cycle and drew attention to the need to restore initial levels of resources.

Fruitful discussion regarding the sixth programming cycle had taken place at the June session of the UNDP Executive Board. Although that discussion had been of a preliminary nature, it was interesting from a conceptual and a methodological point of view.

It was important not to adopt decisions which were not fully worked out. His delegation had favoured the adoption of Executive Board resolution 94/17 regarding the sixth programming cycle, and stressed the importance of the principle of universality of access by all countries receiving assistance and of responding to the needs of all recipient countries in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development. The topic of the sixth programming cycle was closely linked to that of the future activities of the United Nations as a whole. His delegation therefore felt that serious

consideration should be given to the proposal to include the subject of the sixth programming cycle in the 1995 triennial review of operational activities.

His delegation praised the efforts of UNDP in Eastern Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and supported the proposal to reform the Division dealing with those countries as part of the organizational restructuring. His delegation also agreed with the suggestion that the reports of the Executive Boards of the various funds and programmes should contain special sections on subjects for discussion at the Economic and Social Council. Those topics should be of a general nature and should cover the entire United Nations development system.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.